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there was to be no sowing nor reaping, the spontaneous productions of earth and tree were free to every one, rich and poor alike. It is impossible to calculate to what extent the poor were benefited by this law; but the regulations concerning the Sabbatical year lead to the inference that the pauper population was not exposed to pressing want.

Another boon conferred upon the poor by the Sabbatical year was the cancelling of debts. According to the Mosaic law, money lending as a profitable business was rendered an impossibility. The law enjoins the lending of money to those who are in need, as an act of benevolence, and the Rabbins declare, "Greater is he who lends than he who gives alms." (Sabbath 63, *a*).

It was, however, found in the course of time that the law of cancelling debts exercised a paralysing influence on commercial transactions, and a remedy was introduced by Hilel (who lived in the time of the Emperor Augustus), by which the effect of the Sabbatical year was evaded.

Instituting a brief comparison between these laws, and the Licinian rogations among the Romans, as well as the *σεισαχθεία* introduced by Solon, it appears that these laws of the Romans and Greeks were purely *remedial*, while the laws enacted among the Jews were *preventive*. Nevertheless, they did not have the effect of extinguishing pauperism, and a field was still left open for charity properly so called, or almsgiving.

The word which has obtained currency among the Jews for the expression of "charity," or rather "alms," is צְדָקָה. Throughout the Old Testament this word signifies "justice" or "righteousness," its Greek equivalent being *δικαιοσύνη*, but in Rabbinical writings it is invariably used in the sense of "benevolence" or "alms."

From very early times regular organizations for the relief of the poor existed in Jewish communities. They appointed well-known and trusty men who were charged with the collection and distribution of charitable gifts. There was a daily collection of eatables, known by the name of תְּמָחוּי—literally a vessel or dish—and there was a weekly collection of money, called קֹפֶה—literally a box (Baba Bathra, 8, *b*). The contributions were not always voluntary, but in many communities the members were assessed, and the payment of poor-rates was then enforced. The obligation of maintaining the needy extended to the non-Israelite poor. (Gittin, 16, *a*).

It was one of the most essential conditions insisted on in almsgiving that it should not be done in public. The same idea is expressed in the beginning of the sixth chapter of Matthew; but whilst the New Testament passage appears to be chiefly against ostentation, the leading idea in the Rabbinical injunction is a tender regard for the feelings of the recipient, as it is considered sinful to put a man to shame in public.

The most delicate consideration was exhibited in the case of men who had once been in good circumstances, but had become reduced. In the temple at Jerusalem there was a room set apart, called לִשְׁכַּת חֵשָׁאִים, "the chamber of the silent," where pious persons deposited money for charitable purposes, and where descendants of good families, who had become reduced in circumstances, secretly obtained relief. (Shekalim, v., 6).—*Dr. S. Louis, in the Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, June, '83.*

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**The Explanation of the Biblical Names Shem and Japhet.**—Some years ago I put forward the opinion that the Biblical names Shem and Japhet found their

explanation in the Assyrian words *samu*, "olive-colored," and *ippatu*, "the white race." I am now more than ever persuaded that I was right in this suggestion. Will you allow me briefly to give my reasons for making it?

The meaning of the name of Ham has long been recognized. It is an amalgamation of the Hebrew חם, "hot" (a root which is also met with in Assyrian), and the Egyptian *kem*, "black," which was frequently used to denote the land of Egypt itself. Shem, according to the ordinary rule, would correspond with the Assyrian *samu*, the Assyrian *s* representing a Hebrew ש in proper names. Now, *samu* signifies much the same color as the Greek γλαυκός. Its nearest English equivalent would be "grey," which is sometimes used of blue eyes, sometimes of a color that is almost brown. Similarly, while *samu* can be employed to denote a stone, which was probably the Sinaitic turquoise, it was also applied to a mist or cloud. Whether the bye-form *siamu* is the Hebrew שִׁמְשִׁם I will not decide. In any case Professor Delitzsch is certainly right in saying that *samu* is "probably grey, and perhaps brown." It is, in fact, like γλαυκός, "olive-colored," and would thus be appropriately applied to denote the color of the skin of the so-called Semitic population in Western Asia.

Japhet answers almost exactly to the Assyrian *ippatu*, the feminine of *ippu*, "white." Now in the bilingual hymns and elsewhere the Sumerians of Southern Babylonia are called sometimes "black heads," sometimes "black faces," and this "black race" seems to be meant by the word *adamatu*, which is given as the Semitic equivalent of the Accadian *adama*. The latter word was expressed by two ideographs which literally denoted "black blood." At all events *adamatu* would be a close parallel to *ippatu*, the feminine being employed, as is usual in Semitic languages, to represent an abstract noun.—A. H. Sayce, in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, June, '83.

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**Use of Proof Texts.**—Another sin against the Bible is often committed by the indiscriminate use of proof texts in dogmatic assertion and debate. They are hurled against one another in controversy with such difference of interpretation that it has become a proverb that anything can be proved from the Bible. The Bible has been too often used as if it were a text-book of abstract definitions giving absolute truth. On the contrary, the Bible was not made for ecclesiastical lawyers, but for the people of God. It gives the concrete in the forms and methods of general literature. Its statements are ordinarily relative; they depend upon the context in which they are imbedded, the scope of the author's argument, his peculiar point of view, his type of thought, his literary style, his position in the unfolding of divine revelation. There are occasional passages so pregnant with meaning that they seem to present, as it were, the quintessence of the whole Bible. Such texts were called by Luther little bibles. But ordinarily, the texts can be properly understood only in their context. To detach them from their place and use them as if they stood alone, and deduce from them all that the words and sentences may be constrained to give, as absolute statements, is an abuse of logic and the Bible. Such a use of other books would be open to the charge of misrepresentation. Such a use of the Bible is an adding unto the Word of God new meanings and taking away from it the true meaning. Against this we are warned by the Bible itself (Rev. xxii., 18-19). Deduction, inference, and application may be used within due bounds, but they must always be based upon a correct apprehension of the text and context of the passage. These processes should